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COMMENTARY

by Jack H. Lee

Aren't you sick and tired of seeing advertisements in a computer magazine where
a company announces exciting new software, only to find out that there are
available for every computer other than Atari?

The software companies continually REFUSE to release any new software for
Atari. In the five years I have owned my 800, have seen to BIGGEST decline for

the Atari 8-bit so far. Most software nowadays come from the U.K. Every
software store I have seen either carry very little Atari software, or none at
all. Even Toys R' Us carries a very scarce supply. They were once a decent
store to purchase hardware and software. Jack Tramiel was supposed to have
pushed the chain to sell more Atari products, but that seemed to have no
effect.

I REALLY HATE that. Here, I have this excellent machine, and no one cares.
And now that I own a 130XE, I think it's a big shame that I have a machine with

little commercial software to support its capabilities. The companies are
treating us as if we were totally obsolete (like Timex Sinclairs). Why us?

I know piracy is a big problem, but why pick Atari? I have seen mega-piracy in
the Apple and Commodore communities, far more than Atari. Now, the
manufacturers claim in addition to piracy, they don't manufacture Atari
software because of products like Happy, Chipmunk, etc., that duplicate
copy-protected disks. How ironic. Those type of products already exist for
Commodores and Apples. In fact, if people claim that there are more Apples and

Commodores than Ataris, it is reasonable to assume that there are pirates there. It is pathetic that they chose Atari as the scapegoat.

It's also ironic how the companies didn't publish software for Atari, because it was a "game machine". And that was due to the fact that Atari was extremely

popular in the arcades and with their 2600 game machine. So, if Atari is a game machine, why do they refuse to release games for it now, and release them for the other computers (the so-called more "serious" machines)? That really makes no sense to me at all. And now I hear that that the companies refer to the Commodore 64 as the "classic game machine". Totally pathetic. I estimate that the ratio of Commodore to Atari software is 30:1. And that's a good guess, too. The Atari selection in the stores are SO small, that to fill in the empty space, the stores put blank disks, printer paper, and miscellaneous items on the same shelf! That doesn't do the Atari owner much good. Why don't

they bother to order the same amount of new software for Atari as they do for the others? I rarely see anything new a lot of the stuff dates back to when I got my 800. Maybe three or four fresh titles here and there. And that's about it. Unless something is done about this, the Atari 8-bit line may become extinct.

Piracy is what will be most likely to kill the Atari line. Usually, you'll here companies say that they are not releasing Atari versions because of very poor sales of their previous products. So it's obvious it's not because there aren't too many Atari owners, or that most Atari owners don't own disk drives. It's up to us Atari owners for the survival of our computer.

~~ REPLY ~~

What has been left unsaid by the above article is the story about the glut of TRASH software foisted upon us by the same crummy software companies that are doing all crying about ATARI! Well, let them take notice..Gents keep an eye on FTL's Dungeon Master! It is gonna break every sales record you clods ever thought you could establish!!! The message is loud and clear.." Quit the crying and produce quality software, the Atari users are NOT the idiots your demographic "studies" or your pea-brained sales managers have said they are! It is quite evident that the software released for the 8 bit is partly to blame for the "widespread Piracy"...how? easy! It's a pleasure to pirate a crummy program to show as many folks out there how really bad it is...so they dont get suckered into buying it because of the enticing promotions. In short, take your accusations and stuff em! Release REAL software and see REAL profit!!! You say you wont produce for us anymore? Who Cares! Take ALL your MARBLES and run....when all the smoke clears, all the users (not just Atari) will know just how fickle you are. For every software publisher that thinks he is hurting us, let him be the first to pay attention to FTL sales in 1988...we, the users pledge full and unerring support to this fine company for it's outstanding efforts in producing a super quality product for the "so-called" Atari pirates. hahahaha!! What fools are those who think we will not spend for quality...just look at the hardware we use..The very very BEST....ATARI!!!!!!

FTL [FASTER THAN LIGHT] support these folks!

totally tired of crybabys,  
Ralph F. Mariano

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS:  
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-- With LETTERS TO THE EDITOR --

"More Trouble Brewing?" by Alan R. Bechtold

Last week I discussed a VERY important issue facing BBS SysOps: decisions by telephone companies to charge business rates for telephone lines used for non-profit hobby systems and the arbitrary criteria used to determine who should pay those rates.

This week I'd like to bring up something potentially even more important. I want to tell you about The Cyber Foundation OPUS-CBCS BBS. A couple of weeks ago INFO-MAT affiliate Dave Gentry uploaded the log file of his logon to this BBS to me. He felt there was something about the board that we should all be concerned about. I think he was right to worry.

According to a text file describing the system, "The Cyber Foundation is a Non-Profit Government Supported System run by The United States Instructional Department."

"This system is a Test for the Government and FCC," the file reads, "to determine if Bulletin Board Systems, Non-Paying information exchange systems, should be charged for use."

A public message to one user on the system, from Cyber Foundation SysOp Chris Regan, explains:

"'Government Supported' means, that the Government (US) has paid for (in part) this system's use (Hardware, Telephone Line) and due to restrictions I can only say it is in the Southbury/Middlebury Area."

"This is a test," continued Chris in the same message, "to see if Bulletin Boards, their phone lines, and others, should be taxed or have a tariff placed on the information."

Within the body of the same message, Chris also explained "I do not work for the Government, but I was approached by them."

Sound interesting? There's more.

In a later public message, Chris Regan stated that "I personally disagree with FCC officials who think the phone lines should be taxed, and have lobbied against it."

"So far," Regan wrote, "the Test has only turned out positively for us. I do feel, however, that there should be a license in order to operate the High

Speed modems, and/or all modem communications, very much like the Ham Radio operators."

In the above-cited online message, Regan pointed out the guidelines he felt should be involved in obtaining such a BBS license:

- "1) Have a certain type of specific User base, IBM (type) calls IBM (type), Commodore Calls Commodore, and so on. This would mean partitioning areas (is this what the counties are supposed to do?) so all types would be available to the public. And then 1 or 2 "general" systems where they would be able to discuss the aspects of communications.
- "2) Must be filed within 30 days of System Opening, due to the fact that some systems go up and down (pirate boards) and is just a "front" for some other activity.
- "3) That SysOp access will be given to the official at a random time to check on the system status, and if it is legitimate."

So, now we have the U.S. Government running a BBS to determine if BBSs should be charged for the information they distribute and the lines they use, and whether they should be regulated in HOW their boards are operated and even as to WHOM they offer access to their systems!

An interesting turn of events.

First, I must point out that BBSs and modem users are NOT "like ham operators."

Modems don't use the limited broadcast spectrum of frequencies. BBSs can't be "heard" by everyone who turns on their modems.

They are, in fact, no different than PEOPLE talking to PEOPLE. In fact, they ARE just people talking to people, THROUGH their computers!!! I see no more reason for BBSs to be licensed and regulated than for people who call other people on the telephone to be licensed and regulated.

I could be wrong, but this smells a LOT like research to see if our freedom of speech can be tampered with. Either way, the board is there for your perusal and comment. I suggest you call the Cyber Foundation BBS and let them know how

you feel. This is your chance to let the U.S. Government know what you think should be done about THEIR perceived "modem problem!"

Call the Cyber Foundation BBS at 203-264-5463. Their Fido node number, if you want to send NetMail, is 142/444.

Don't be discourteous! Just look around for yourself and leave comments as to YOUR real feelings about what you have seen.

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## STAR TREK GAME HINTS

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author unknown

Star Trek: The Rebel Universe      Hints & Help

Space: The Final Frontier.....

This file is in two sections: the first is general hints and help with Star Trek: The Rebel Universe. The second section contains one of the many possible solutions to the game.

Please DO NOT READ the second section if you don't want to know!!!!!! The author assumes no resposibilitiy for lost fun and/or broken dreams.

And now.....Mr. Sulu, set course for Section I, Warp factor 4!

### Section I: General Help Information

R.T.B.M.!!!!!! (Read the blasted Manual!!) The manual that comes with the game is really excellent. Simon & Schuster did an excellent job with the packaging and documentation. So don't blame me if you didn't read it and you don't know what Catastrophe Pods are! (This file is NOT intended to help anyone who didn't

BUY this game! I will not support the Pirates who are cutting off the ST's lifeblood by STEALING software.)

All Tactical Items are NOT created equal! Or at least, some are more useful than others. I find that immediately getting the Cernekov Crystal (a Russian Invention!), as outlined in the manual, is a very good idea, Keptin! Otherwise, you may go nowhere FAST! (Look up Cernekov Crystal under Tactical Devices to see why.) A Hotshot Device and/or Chaff Emitter should be next, followed by Klingon and Romulan Jammers and a Logic Emitter. A Solar Scan Device is a nice extra, if you happen to find one.

Decide on your strategy! There are some eight or ten different ways to win this game: Choose ONE as your plan and stick to it. If you've decided to try blackmailing the Klingon Admiral, then do so; don't try to destroy the Mining Complex in the middle.

This IS an adventure game; so standard adventure rules apply:

Take good notes, especially about what items are found where. Save the game frequently. Very frequently. There is space for eight games on each Save Disk, use all of them.

Experiment with different Landing Party members. Spock is often a good place to start, but the Logical choice isn't always the best answer. Sometimes a little down-home sense will do the trick. In general though, if Spock's analysis says to use a Helix Gun, a Phaser will usually do the job. The Planet Exploration Form (from the Manual) is a good way to organize things. I write the star-jumps I took to reach a system in the notes area, which really helps when trying to go back somewhere. Just knowing that a system is in a Local Zone

isn't enough....you need to know where you started in the Quarantine Zone and then where you went in the Regional Zone. I've been to systems that it seems can only be reached from one other system in one particular Regional Zone. So rather than going crazy trying to retrace your path, write it down! (And don't forget to click on Jim Kirk to freeze the game!)

Keep a separate list of systems with Orbital Discontinua!

Fire Phasers sparingly. They need time to recharge, so try to pause a few seconds between shots IF POSSIBLE! If you must use them rapid-fire, then know that you'll get four shots if they were fully charged, then you must switch over to Photon Torpedoes. I was destroyed several times by sitting there and pounding the mouse button, wondering why my Phasers wouldn't fire.

ALWAYS listen to Scotty!!

Don't fight unless it's necessary! If you're sitting in one system, trying to find your next destination on the Star-globe screen and you get attacked, set course for any nearby system and set a low warp speed. Stop after three seconds

or so. You should be one or two light-years outside of your previous system, and I've never seen the enemy follow outside a system. You should only fight if you need something in that system.

Avoid distractions! Or, in the words of The Next Generation's Captain Picard, "Shut off that damn noise!" When Kirk calls Battle Stations, stop on the Bridge

screen for a split second; just long enough to click on the red bar at the bottom of the screen. This will shut off the annoying Whoop-whoop which the game uses for a red alert klaxon. Then continue and click on Chekov and then the targeting screen and blow those %\$#@^%#\$ ships to smithereens. Another fine

point of battle: Once Chekov says "Got 'im!", immediately click on the targeting screen and line up your next target; don't wait for the first ship to

fade away. Also, I never find time during battle to have Spock analyze an enemy ship; their status doesn't matter if they're still shooting at you.

More about battle: The manual describes how to line up your target on the targeting grid so that it's in front of you, etc. Forget it! Every time I try rotating the grid and adjusting the angle, I get the daylights shot out of me! Click on the targeting screen and then just click on the closest "T" to the Enterprise. Rotating the grid IS a good way to find out if there are any more foes attacking before they show up on the grid. If there are no enemy ships, the grid will not rotate and you can secure from general quarters.

Section II: Specific Help and One Solution

WARNING!!! The following paragraphs contain some explicit solution information

for Star Trek: The Rebel Universe. Please DO NOT READ further if you don't want to know!!

### Specific Help

Whatever info I have on the following has been included, I apologize that I haven't kept better notes myself, but there are Priorities.....

QZ=Quarantine Zone, RZ=Regional Zone, LZ=Local Zone

Klingon Jammer: Start at Hazion (18.44.75, QZ), set course for Vorkal (20.55.73, LZ), then set course for Vukier (28.53.73, LZ). Set course for Vukier V and beam down; Uhura will get you past the Force Field Generator, beam

up with the Jammer. (You may want to continue on to Lorzur (31.49.84, LZ) for weapons and energy, and a Cernekov Crystal on Lorzur III if you don't have one.) OR at Kornas III (80.67.57)

Romulan Jammer: Vuniex I (40.65.73). OR at Vormiol II (24.61.71)

Chaff Emitter: Vermiur (71.61.23), have Bones walks towards the Janitor Robot. OR at Taziok I (54.44.17, QZ)

Solar Scan Device: Vernen (64.67.72, QZ) to Narkiek V (52.54.82, LZ)

Hot Shot Device: Xumiux III (43.11.45, LZ) OR at Vorrier I (28.31.25)

Solution Scenario: Destroy Dekian II

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#### Must Have:

- a) 1 Tachyon Gun, available at Rariar III (75.74.39, RZ), bring Bones.
- b) 1 Chaos Trigger, available at Karxen II (16.42.56, RZ); Energy & Repair Dock also in that system.

#### Recommended:

- a) Hot Shot Device
- b) Chaff Emitter
- c) Solar Scan Device
- d) Cernekov Crystal

#### Procedure:

- a) Get Enterprise to maximum Energy, Dilithium, Weapons and Structure.
- b) Go to the center-most system, Dakiak (51.50.50, QZ)
- c) Go to Danian (63.62.51, LZ). There is a Synapse Bomb on Danian I, explode it.
- d) Set course for Dekian, it'll be at the very top of the Local Zone Star-globe from Danian, at (63.51.52). Head there at maximum warp. Prepare to be attacked by MANY Klingon Ships.
- e) Arriving at Dekian, set course for Dekian II at maximum impulse power. A Solar Scan Device will tell you how many Klingon Ships will block your way.
- f) Once in orbit, click on Kirk and then the Transporter box. Choose your landing party, then go to ships Stores. Bring the Tachyon Gun and the Chaos

Trigger; it doesn't matter who has what. Return to the Transporter and SAVE GAME. Energize!

- g) On the surface, use the Tachyon gun on the Blast Door and the Chaos Trigger on the Mining Control Console. Congratulations!!! Now.....about that plan to Capture the Klingon Admiral...

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## Hard Disk History Part 1

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From The Hard Disk User Group Newsletter  
This article edited by: Chuck Leazott

Submitted by: R.P. Mulhearn

This very informative article comes to us via (and is reprinted from) the Jackintosh Gazette all the way from AUSTRALIA! It's a historical file and tells us a lot of things we didn't know, and some we did.

Some of the information is rather vague, so I've included numerous notes within []'s to help clarify some of them. In other places I've simply rewritten a sentence or too. It's a nifty article. Enjoy.

The Hard Drives used by mainframes generally have multiple disk surfaces and multiple read/write heads all working simultaneously. This allow for storage of all the data lines from a mainframe memory at one time. Most such drives have removable disk packs and elaborate air filters.

Microcomputers typically use a much simpler (and cheaper) system. Almost all of these are "Winchester"-style fixed drives, from which the disk pack cannot be removed. The Winchester name comes from the code name of an early project to develop cheaper [more inexpensive] drives.

The differences are that, being a fixed disk, engineering tolerances are slightly eased. Although there is a separate read/write head for each disk [platter] surface, only one head is used at a time, and thus only one read/write amplifier and associated electronics is required.

Also, it means as few as 2 or 4 disk surfaces [1 or 2 platters] can be included, rather than the 16 or 32 surfaces [8 or 16 platters] of a mainframe hard disk.

Some disadvantages of this are that data must be converted from parallel to serial form before reaching the head for writing, and the reverse when reading.

This also means that a Winchester drive must run a lot slower than a mainframe hard disk since data reaches it in a serial stream. The slowness, however, is purely relative; it is still many times faster than a floppy disk drive, since most hard drives rotate at 3600 RPM as compared to the typical [Atari 1050] floppy speed of 288 RPM.

There are a large number of "standards" in the Winchester world, however, we will consider only the most common of these. A complete Winchester system consists of three conceptual blocks which are mostly separate, although they can be built on a single board nowadays, and will increasingly be built in one piece.

These are the Host Computer Adapter (HCA), the SASI or SCSI Drive Controller/Interface and the actual Disk Drive/Interface. The physical size, capacity, and

to some extent, speed of the drive doesn't really make much difference to the way things work.

[Now...a little technical data]. The HCA provides electrical and signal interfaces between your computer and the SASI/SCSI bus. In the Atari 520/



1040ST, this consists of a Direct Memory Access (DMA) port, plus relatively few control lines, which is built into the ST, proper.

A similar device is now built into [other] computers apart from transferring data under the DMA, the HCA is only required to pass a software Command Descriptor Block (CDB) to the drive controller, using a particular software protocol. Although there is provision for eight (8) classes of CDB, numbered 0 through 7, only 3 affect normal disk operation.

Class 0 is Data, Non-Data and Status commands. Class 1 is disk copy commands. Class 6 is disk parameter assign commands. Class 7 is for diagnostics. The rest

of the classes are reserved for future use. The command protocol is sufficiently flexible to allow for the use of optical disks and other intelligent peripherals in the future. For example, a possibility being considered is that of connection of the Ozi Rabble computer [don't ask me] as an intelligent household control computer.

Since the Drive Controller must respond to software commands, it follows that it must be "intelligent", or consist of a complete microcomputer itself. It also needs some sort of relatively standard hardware and software interface to the Host Adaptor.

One of the earliest intelligent standards for the Micro world was the Shugart Associates System Interface (SASI) [I bet you never thought we would tell you what those letters meant, huh?]. SASI was devised by the Xerox-owned, but now defunct, drive maker Shugart Associates around 1980. [See? HD's are really new to the micro systems].

The question of which "standard" to use led to a division among members of the American National Standards Institute committee (ANSI X3T9.2). The mainframe and mini computer members of which, tended to favor the Intelligent Peripheral Interface (IPI) based on a Sperry Univac design. The breakaway committee (ANSI X3T9.2) favored the Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) [There's the other one], which is essentially the same as SASI.

Hard disk drives have been decreasing in physical size and the interfaces to the disk drive controller have also changed. The older 14 inch drives [These are the removable disk packs containing many platters, and use an air blower/filter system to keep the dust away from the platters.] tend to use Control Data's Storage Module Drive (SMD) and MMD interfaces, while the 8 inch drives mostly use the SA1000 interface.

With the arrival of the 5.25" and smaller [3.5"] hard disks, most makers followed the Seagate ST506 or ST412 disk drive controller interfaces. Interestingly, the ST506 is a spinoff of the Shugart Associates SA1000 8" interface, except the data rate is increased from 4.34 Megabits p/sec to 5 Mbits/s. Many (but not all) ST506 disk drive controllers are able to handle the SA1000-style drives, also.

One problem with the ST506 interface is that it calls for the drive data to be supplied in Modified Frequency Modulated (MFM) form, somewhat similar to that provided by a double density floppy drive. This was originally used because it saved space on the drive electronics card, where space was at a premium.

[More Technotes For Technuts]. The data separator, which consists of a Phased Locked Loop (PLL) with a large number of components, including fine-tuning

potentiometers, is left on the disk drive controller card, where there is room.

However, there are disadvantages to this approach as the system is susceptible to noise induced errors. Mounting a data separator in the drive itself eliminates this problem, as the drive then produces separate data and synchronizing clock signals for the controller.

Several drive manufacturers have proposed a modified ST506. This is the Enhanced Small Disk Interface (ESDI). Some advantages of the ESDI approach is that it allows faster data rates up to 10 Mbits/s, since PLL can be tuned to suit the specific drive rather than always set for 5 Mbits/s. This also makes it possible to use Run Length Limited (RLL) encoding schemes. This can allow much greater data densities, and thus higher capacities while still using the same style of drive. [A perfect example is the Seagate ST225 and ST238. It's the same drive, but using a different platter coating and controller gives you 30 MEG instead of 20 MEG].

///Next week another section Part 2///

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PROBING YOUR ST

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by Mr. Goodprobe

You light up my drive!!!

I don't know about you, but not only is my electric bill high enough, but I hate to have things run when its a matter of me not using them, and that precious electricity is going to waste. And the wear and tear on the system as it just sits there not being used. There is a power indicator on your Goldstar made SC1224 monitor, but it is tiny to say the least, and can easily be overlooked.

I have obtained a small plastic bubble shaped like a "c" sitting on its side, and glued it around the edges to my indicator, this acted like a magnifying lens and now the light is visible from a much larger distance. But what about those disk drives?

Now there you have no idea what the status of those are..till now! We will add a power indicator LED so you will be able to see from a glance the on/off status of your precious SF 314/354 disk drive.

Needed parts:

1. LED (color is not important, suit your tastes) Available from local parts suppliers, hobby shops, or computer repair centers.
2. 1/4 watt resistor any value from 220 to 470 ohms will work fine. Ideally you should use a 470 ohm 2 per cent unit.

Now on with the dirty work. Place the drive top down on a soft, clean surface. You will see four screws on the outer edge of your drive, remove these and place them in a small container so they will not decide to take a vacation while you are not looking.

Take the top off, and place the rest of the drive in a safe spot. Take a good look at the front of the drive and choose the spot you would like the LED to be located, and choose the position that suits you best both for visibility and

out and out good looks.

Obtain a drill that is the same diameter as your LED and proceed to slowly drill out a hole for it.

Lay the drive top aside, and place the remainder of the drive in front of you, with the back of the drive facing you. You will notice 2 plugs that are in the back of the drive mechanism itself, a large one, and a small one with 4 conductors. We will want pins 1 and 2 of this cable. On one version the wires will be blue and white, and the other it will be red and white. It will be best if you hook it up right the first time, but not too critical, as the worst

that can happen is the LED would go bad in an extreme situation, they are pretty hardy little buggers! Take a piece of wire, a piece from 9 inches to a foot would be fine, and solder one end to pin 1 of the plug at the rear of the drive mechanism.

Take the resistor, cut the leads to about 1/4 to 1/2 inch long on each end. Solder one end of this resistor to the anode lead of the LED. If you hold the lead, with the legs facing you, you will notice that there is probably one side

of the LED which has a flat spot. If it does, this flat spot denotes that the leg of the LED closest to the flat spot is the CATHODE of the LED. If the LED doesn't have a straight spot, the lead closest to the dead center of the underside of the LED is the ANODE of the LED. Connect to the anode with the free end of the resistor you previously soldered to the wire. Next, cut another piece of wire the same length as the prior piece. Solder this wire to pin 2 of the connector, and the other end to the other free lead of the LED.

All that remains is to judiciously glue the lead into the front cover, and reassemble the drive. When you power it up, you should be greeted by a pleasing warm glow when the drive is on. If not, check your connections, if this doesn't

work, try reversing your leads to the LED and see if it lights, but this project is of the simpler variety and you should not really have any problems with it.

REMEMBER: These mods will not increase the value of your drive but, in fact, decrease it as most folks want the stuff "CHERRY" so.....  
.....PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK!

Keep those Atari's hummin'

Mr. Goodprobe

(on lend from)

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Atari 8/16 Repair/Sales

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And the final word....

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Since we are now publishing ST-Report on weekly basis, (For the time being), the issues will be more compact in length. Holding information for two weeks in the past kept the issues rather large. I hope you will find the smaller issues just as interesting.

We return next Wednesday.

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